

[Joe Penniger]

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Joe Penniger (White)

Service Station Operator

Huntersville, N.C.

Mary P. Wilson, Writer

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser Original Names Changed Names

Joe Penniger John Payne C9 - N.C. Box 1

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Dressed in a bathing suit made of a suit of unionalls, John Payne was playing around in a pond of water like a sixteen-year old boy, and not the successful business man that he is.

"You can laugh at an old man getting out and having a little pleasure if you want to," he said to me. "You'd probably feel like doing the same thing if you had worked all your life and not had any time to play."

"And just what has kept you so busy?" I asked him.

"Work," he exclaimed. "I couldn't be bothered with running around until I had my family taken care of. I have three boys and three girls. I certainly haven't let them lack for the necessities of life. I want them all to graduate from high school and get some kind of business education. I'll send them to college if they want to go, unless my business falls off.

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"I didn't go to school any after I finished the seventh grade. I quit for the lack of sense, I guess, because my father tried to get me to stay in school.

"My father was a farmer but he also had a blacksmith shop. I worked eleven years in the shop. I don't believe there is any other vocation that is more helpful 2 to a boy physically than that is. I'm as strong as a mule today and feel like I could scrap with any man my size.

"After automobiles came in style I started doing mechanical work. I've had this service station out here since Christmas morning 1923. I had a blacksmith shop beside my station for two years. Now I use the building for a garage.

"I want you to know that I'm tickled to death with what I have. Some folks think I an too proud, but I do know that it all came honestly. There have been hundreds of times that I have missed out in not having more education. I've had the opportunity of jobs that I could not accept on that account. My father was active in a blacksmith shop for more than fifty three years. I see a lot of things differently since I've grown up. Kids who go to school have more advantages beside being looked up to a lot better. I do know that my oldest girl has a job in the Court house that she would not have been able to get or keep if she had quit school like I did.

"I'd like for my wife to have another baby but she refuses to do it. I guess she's right in feeling as she does for she has had three nervous breakdowns. Please don't let me start about what it cost me for doctor bills. I've paid for three appendicitis operations and four tonsils beside the six labor cases.

"I want to see some pleasure now, for I don't believe my time to live is going to be as long as it has been. I 3 fish and hunt every spare minute I have. I'm planning to do a lot of deer hunting this winter.

"I've owned my home since 1918. I had it two years before I bought an automobile. I don't buy the latest models now but I have my own shop where I can keep mine in good running

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condition. My income is three to one more than when I first married. In fact, my business builds up a little every month. My expenses are \$150.00 a month. Of course that includes my Insurance, taxes, lights, water and licenses. I went in debt \$140.00 three years ago for electric equipment. I owe less than \$100.00 on that now. I used to use a Genco plant. I couldn't run my business with that. It would operate my Kelvinator or battery equipment. A high line is more convenient and economical in every way.

"I'd like to live better, religiously and financially, but I guess I must be a quaker in spirit. I never have made the move to do it. I do realize that if I don't pull out of the rut myself that I'll stay in it a long time. I belong to the Presbyterian church but I know I don't live right. I get entirely too much enjoyment out of drinking whiskey and running around to ever settle down to being a good christian man.

"I never want to be rich, but I aim to make a good living for my family and have plenty. My oldest daughter give me thirty dollars every month and she has been buying most of the clothes for the rest of the family since she first started to work. I'm so proud of my children. I 4 only wish we had fifteen instead of six.

"I'm supposed to vote a Democrat ticket, but I often split my ticket if there is a Republican I want to help out. My father raised me to be a Democrat. He was very strict about making as go to church and live right. I never got in no devilment by listening to him.

"I think you've seen my home. It's the white house right beside of the service station. I wouldn't care if it had a room I could call my own. I want to build more to it when I got out of debt. I have six rooms now. We have five double beds. I like my bath room. The whole family likes to use it and keep it clean. It has a tub and shower too.

"I'm thinking I will settle down to work after I live through my dangerous forties.